



Oak Lodge celebration show

By Daphne Chamberlain
Oak Lodge was celebrating last month. The secondary school in Heath View was re-accredited as a National Autistic Society specialist centre, going above and beyond NAS standards. This follows their outstanding Ofsted result.

What better way to celebrate than with a show? Pupils sang, danced and made music, while their friends clapped, cheered, whooped and high-fived. The hall was alive with mutual support and encouragement.

Robert Pritchett from the NAS told them: "I've not had so much fun since I came here three years ago to present your previous certificate".

Learning from each other

Headteacher Lynda Walker and Assistant Head for Autism Ginny D'Odorico agreed that this was a celebration of the achievements of both pupils and staff, emphasising that they all learned from each other.

A father of three autistic children spoke about his experience. He said: "At first it brought out the worst in me. Now it's brought out the best." Instead of money and security, he now knows that the greatest gift he can give his children is love and time. They have made him more humble and understanding, and have taught him how to deal with fear. With courage and love, life will work out. He tells his children that people sometimes want them to be different, but the greatest thing is to be themselves.

Jenny and Marc speak out

Two of the pupils gave their own testimony. Jenny said: "Sometimes I repeat things. Sometimes people don't



Marc Sindole, a student in year 12. Photo courtesy of Oak Lodge School.

understand. I recognise when I upset people, but it takes time. I would like people to understand the way I react, the way my behaviour changes."

Marc said, "Sometimes people think I'm rude. They don't like loud voices. I like to shake hands and ask people questions. I like remembering what I'm good at." He had found it hard to make friends, but was doing that now.

Clinical psychologist Adriana Fernandez-Chirre from Barnet SCAN told THE ARCHER that the school has an environment conducive to learning, which helps children succeed and shine.

Not all the 165 pupils are autistic, but all have learning

difficulties. There are 12 places for pupils older than 19, as a franchise of Barnet and Southgate College.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Go now!

In the weird world of the disunited kingdom it's only a few months until the Scots can vote for independence. Lucky old Scotland. What bugs me is that we don't have any say in the matter. Why can't we have a referendum? Why don't they ask us 'do you want to get rid of Scotland?'

I can think of some pretty good reasons for dumping the useless north of the island and once we've got rid of Scotland we can make sure they don't get back in. And I don't just mean rebuilding Hadrian's Wall, I mean proper defences to stop them reverting to type and invading Newcastle every summer. Knowing the Scots, fair bet they'll get together with anyone who shares their hatred of England. Last time Scotland was independent they got the French to help, next time it could be North Korea.

And then there's the culinary wasteland that is Scottish cuisine. Who's going to miss deep fried pizzas, deep fried haggis and deep fried cream eggs? In parts of Scotland the only way to get people to eat lettuce is to deep fry it.

Why should they share the pound or the Queen? Let them find their own currency, something like the Irn Bru or the kilt. If they want the Queen as their monarch they'll have to grovel. Traditionally that means the entire Scottish nobility crawling naked along the Royal Mile to pledge loyalty to the true crown.

So what's the down side? The Scots always insist it's 'their oil', but once we've built a new pipeline to bring the stuff ashore in Essex it won't matter. Anyway, even if they kept it, their economic incompetence the last time they were in charge means it won't be theirs for long. I'm not talking about Brown Gordon, I'm talking about the great Scottish empire that was meant to begin with the Darien expedition. Only the Scots could decide to start their empire by invading a swamp in Panama. It didn't end well, it bankrupted the country and they had to come begging to the English for help.

But let's end on a high note: we could take the opportunity to expel the 800,000 Scots who are currently cluttering up England's green and pleasant land. As Cameron is Scottish we could always start there. And on that basis voting 'yes I want to get rid of Scotland' starts to make sense.

Gift of reading

Minicab and courier company GLH, based in the High Road, has pledged £10,000 to buy books for the school library at its near-neighbour The Archer Academy.

The gift will allow the new secondary school, where English is a specialism, to substantially enhance the range of texts on offer, supporting the promotion of reading for pleasure and study.

Headteacher Mick Quigley said: "On behalf of everyone at the school, I would like to thank GLH for this generous donation, which will enrich the learning experience of each and every one of our students."



Robert Scott, centre left, with Archer Academy headteacher Mick Quigley and students.

GLH in the running for sustainability award

By Diana Cormack

GLH, the mini cab and courier business based opposite East Finchley tube station, has long been involved in local projects. Its generous donations to community events and school projects are not always publicised, but in recent years the company's involvement in sustainability and green issues has been recognised.

Amongst other things THE ARCHER has featured the late managing director John Scott's tree planting at Martin School, tree plantations being created in West Wales and subsequently a nature reserve at Totteridge Academy being named after

him (THE ARCHER, November 2012).

Hard work by GLH members, school staff and pupils created the thriving nature reserve and it is for their input at Totteridge Academy that GLH has been long listed for the 2degrees Social Value Champions Award (named thus because limiting global warming to below 2C is said to be the way to prevent climate change). To learn more visit www.2degreesnetwork.com

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